

A Matter of Perspective by jackwabbit

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Friendship

Language: English

Characters: Robin, Steve H.

Status: Completed

Published: 2019-07-13 17:01:41

Updated: 2019-07-13 17:01:41

Packaged: 2019-12-12 18:55:44

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,338

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

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Time Frame: Intentionally vague. Any time after season three.

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Disclaimer: Maybe in the Upside Down, I own Stranger Things, but somehow, I doubt it.

Note: This one is for Heather, just because she's had a rough patch and because she agrees with me that "FrOTP" is the best.

It was a comfortable silence.

Robin leaned back against the cab of the truck and extended her legs down the length of the bed. She took a swig of beer and sighed, looking up at the stars. It was a gorgeous night, and the silence between her and her companion was indeed comfortable. She hated to break it. It was so rare they got time alone. Still, that very solitude was why she had to ask the question that had been bugging her for ages. So, after an awkward throat clearing, she spoke up.

"Steve?"

Steve Harrington didn't look at her. He continued to look up at the sky, lost in thoughts of who-knew-what. But he answered absentmindedly.

"Yeah?"

Robin smiled at his distraction. Steve Harrington, a stargazer. Who knew?

"You remember when I told you?" she asked.

"Told me what?" mumbled Steve, still not really paying attention.

"You know... the thing?"

Steve brought his eyes down, scrunching up his face and looking at his own feet next to hers in the bed of the truck as if they somewhat surprised him. He shook his head a little as he responded.

"The thing?"

Robin stared at the side of his head. "Yeah," she said, as if it was obvious what she was talking about. "The thing... about me?"

Steve's eyes grew a little more puzzled for just a second, then they grew wide in understanding. He sat up straighter and gave Robin a look that tried (and failed) to say he knew the point all along. He half turned to her and finally met her eyes.

"Oh! Um, yeah. Of course. Yeah," he said, nodding entirely too much.

Robin rolled her eyes at him, then smiled, then grew pensive - all in the span of about two seconds. She tucked her chin to her chest and wouldn't look at him as she seemed to think something over. She looked nervous; almost scared.

Steve noticed. He drew his feet up under him and fully turned to her, sitting cross-legged as he ducked down to meet her eyes.

"Hey. What is it?"

Robin half smiled at the concern in his voice, then let out a small, quiet chuckle.

"Well, I was just wondering..."

She trailed off, still looking anxious, as she tucked a strand of hair behind her ear.

"What?" asked Steve, blinking and looking worried.

"It's just... why didn't you freak out?"

Steve couldn't help it. He let out a short laugh, sagging back against the side of the truck. His body posture and face went from anxious to relaxed in a heartbeat.

"Oh, please," he said, waving a hand at Robin dismissively.

Now it was Robin's turn to be puzzled. This was a big deal to her, and Steve was just blowing her off. She was honestly a little pissed at his response. She snapped at him.

"What do you mean 'oh please'?"

Steve leveled a disbelieving look at her.

"Really?" he said, sarcastic enough to remind Robin of his high school days.

That wasn't a compliment, and now Robin was well and truly angry. She matched Steve's sarcasm and then some as she responded.

"Yes, really! I mean, it's not every day that people like me... you know I can't tell just anybody! You know how most people would react! And for you of all people to not bat an eye, well, excuse me if that surprised me just a bit! And if you say this is a 'phase' or that I just 'have to meet the right guy' or some other shit like that, I swear..."

Robin was cut off by Steve's voice calmly interrupting her tirade. He said only one word but it stopped her mid-sentence.

"Robin."

His tone, just loud enough and deadly serious, got her attention. When she looked at him, she found his face matched it. His eyes bored into hers and all traces of humor and sarcasm were gone. Robin held his gaze for a moment, startled by his intensity, then blinked in confusion.

"What?"

Steve let out a small sigh, then spoke slowly.

"There was a secret Russian base under the mall."

Robin's mouth opened slightly as she gave Steve a look of utter bewilderment. She didn't say anything, though, so Steve kept going.

"Remember the Mind Flayer?"

Robin shook her head slightly, wondering if Steve had lost his mind. There were abrupt subject changes, and then there was whatever this was.

"I don't follow you," she mumbled.

Steve took on a patient look as he sighed.

"I told you about the Demodogs."

Robin nodded, but was still looking at Steve like he'd grown a second head.

"How many beers have you had?"

Steve sighed again. "The Demogorgon? The fact that I even know these words? I can go on."

"Yeah," answered Robin. "I know. Monsters in small town America and all that shit. Like, for real. But how is this relevant? Wait. Are you stoned?"

Steve acted like he didn't hear her. "Little kid with super powers? Any of this ringing a bell?"

Robin did the same. "No, seriously, are you stoned?"

Steve sighed yet again, bigger this time.

"Robin, I had an interdimensional portal in my back yard. If you really think I give two shits about your little secret after something like that, well... you got another think coming. That's how it's relevant, dork."

Robin opened her mouth to retort, then stopped. At some point, she'd

turned to face Steve, assuming his cross-legged position and leaning into his space like he'd done earlier. And now, she mirrored his deflation, sagging back into the side of the truck bed. She blinked a few times as she stared down at the space between them in puzzlement.

Then she laughed. It was a short laugh, but it clearly was one of relief. When she looked up at Steve, her eyes were shining and she looked as if she finally understood one of the great mysteries of the universe.

"I hadn't thought about it like that," she said. "I thought maybe it was the drugs."

Steve shook his head and gave Robin a sincere smile.

"Nah," he said, with the tiniest shrug. "Just a matter of perspective. I mean, after all that, it just...didn't matter."

Robin smiled back.

"Even with..." she murmured, trailing off as words left her.

"What?" asked Steve.

Robin gestured between them. "Your, uh, confession?"

Steve snorted. "Didn't matter," he repeated. He ran one hand over the back of his neck, then let it drop into his lap. Then he shrugged again – bigger this time – and waved his hand in the air. "Larger stakes. Bigger fish. Whatever you want to say. Did I mention the interdimensional portal?"

Robin matched his snort and then chuckled.

"I can't believe I'm saying this, but... you make a good point."

Steve crossed his arms over his chest and gave her a smug look.

"I know."

Robin rolled her eyes.

"So humble."

Steve grinned.

"You love it."

Robin laughed.

"Oh, shut up, dingus."

Miraculously, Steve did exactly that. He leaned back, took a sip of his forgotten beer, and stopped talking.

Then he smiled – and looked up at the stars.

Robin's gaze lingered on him for just a moment. Then she did the same.

It was quiet again for a long, long time.

It was a comfortable silence.